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ABSTRACT

Perspectives on connections between corporations, the military, and colleges are provided, with attention to whether corporate and government control is exerted over education. According to James Ridgeway's "The Closed Corporation," colleges are central to business/industrial and government/military activity. His examples include: government and corporate funding for research, university investments of endowment funds, research institutes in support of corporate and government objectives, university and corporate business association for profit, and university officials and faculty on corporate boards and consulting for business and government. Also considered are three ideological orientations: the dominant, accommondationist, and radical. The dominant ideology supporting corporations includes a belief in materialism, consumerism, weak industry regulation, and restraint on taxes for business and the rich. The accommodationist ideology perceives deficiencies in this corporate system but accepts its basic structure and values as inevitable, while the radical ideology criticizes economic evils in the system. A brief overview of the entire system of control is provided to indicate the quality of corporate and government control over education. A 24-item bibliography is included. (SW)

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CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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--The president of Stevens Institute of Technology once sat on the boards of seven corporations simultaneously.
--The Wisconsin Alumnae Research Foundation licensed businesses producing Vitamin D and rat poison and invested in real estate, all in secrecy (no annual report).
--The Dean of the University of Texas at Austin pushed for university initiation of new industry--for example, marine sciences--and he pulled together groups of businessmen, professors, and state officials to do it.
--A reporter for The Michigan Daily revealed the conflict of interest in the activities of one of its regents, who was president of University Microfilms. Subsequently, the reporter was recommended by the Daily staff to be the next editor. Such a recommendation had been accepted by the student publications board for twenty-five years. But the reporter was rejected because the president of the university opposed the nomination. It eventually became known that the president had persuaded three previous editors of the Daily to suppress the story.
--In 1967 Stanford University's industrial park contained fifty companies and over two hundred companies surrounded the campus, all in close touch with the university's electronic laboratory or the Stanford Research Institute. In that year Stanford realized $1 million in leases from the property and the Institute grossed $25 million. The same university fired English professor H. Bruce Franklin, author of a dozen books, for protesting U. S. government, corporate, and Stanford involvement in the Vietnam War. The faculty committee majority which voted his dismissal had connections with the military-industrial- educational complex.
--The president of the University of California had been the Pentagon Secretary's assistant, and three consecutive directors of the Pentagon's Research and Engineering bureau had come out of the university's Radiation Laboratory by 1967, in virtually an interlocking university/Pentagon directorate.
--Former Senator J. William Fulbright was denied information regarding the Vietnam War prepared by the Institute for Defense Analysis, a think tank run for the Pentagon by twelve universities, although the presidents of the universities had access to the information.

Anecdotes are dramatic, but like proverbs they can deceive as well as illuminate. Only if the anecdotes illustrate a proven pattern are they reliable guides to thought and action. These anecdotes (with one addition) come from James Ridgeway's 1968 The Closed Corporation, the most detailed single exposé of the close connections between corporations, the military, and colleges since the publication of Upton Sinclair's Goosestep in 1923. These two books offer hundreds of examples of these relationships. Ridgeway and more recent observers of the United

HE 019 216

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States believe what President Eisenhower referred to as the "military-industrial complex" has become more entrenched. Bertram Gross now epitomizes the U. S. with the phrase "friendly fascism." Is there reason for alarm? Is there a "military-industrial-educational complex?" And is it harmful to democracy? It is the purpose of this essay and of the bibliography for which the essay is an introduction to collect published expressions of disquietude and depracation regarding the complex. The evidence is gathering that pattern does exist and is deepening.

To Ridgeway the university is central to business/industrial-government/Pentagon activity, constituting a new kind of corporate machine: government and corporate funding for research, secrecy, university investments of endowment funds, professors seeking grants, research institutes in support of corporate and government objectives, university and corporate business association for profit, federal contract research centers run by universities, professors creating companies spun off from work done with public funds, university officials and professors on boards of directors of corporations and consulting for business and government, professors with double employment with a corporation or the government, philanthropy, think tanks, endowed chairs, foundations, trustees from corporations, honorary degrees for corporate officials, university lobbies in Washington, university ownership of real estate, university public relations offices to support these activities, and running through it all anti-communism and anti-Sovietism.

These revelations are ominous by themselves, but Ridgeway shows only part of the corporate-government-education picture. He says nothing about primary and secondary education (Apple, Giroux, Harty). But a more serious omission is his failure to explain education through a general theory of control. Katznelson and Kesselman offer such a theory in their chapter, "Ideology and the Creation of Consciousness." The skeleton of their argument goes like this. We act according to the way we perceive reality. The power to define reality is unequally distributed and is held primarily by the representatives of the dominant economic and political institutions of a time and place. That is, groups which occupy positions of the greatest privilege tend to have the greatest access to persuasion and legitimation, and therefore their ideas tend to prevail for the whole society, even for the powerless and the victims. The values and interests of the dominant groups tend to set the standards for what is generally considered to be real and right.

Who rules America? asks G. William Domhoff in book after book. A ruling elite, he avers. In multifarious and complex ways this elite has gained hegemony over institutions and information and thereby over people's beliefs. The values and practices of the elite have become dominant through becoming institutionalized in corporations, advertising, the presidency, the military and intelligence establishments, secrecy, the media--and education (see also Dye). Through diverse modes, the schools mediate the dominant power structure and its ideology for

the general population and socialize students into the dominant order--that is, into the status quo of the corporate-military technocracy and its need for differentiated and docile labor (see also Bowles & Gintis, Smith).

Reynolds and Henslin, likewise, argue that the master institutions of the U. S.--the economic, political, and military--have relegated the other institutions--religious, familial, educational--to positions of minor importance, "mere appendages to the market." To them, education has become the "indoctrinating appendage" of the corporate-government complex of power.

Katznelson and Kesselman offer a theory also of how this hegemony works in the U. S. through the power to define alternatives. They identify three ideological orientations: dominant, accommodationist, and radical. The dominant ideology is that of the corporations and their supporters: belief in materialism, consumerism, possessive individualism, technology, weak regulaton of industry, restraint on taxes for corporations and the rich, and procedural democracy, accompanied by exaltation of work, family, religion, freedom, competition, and patriotism, and opposition to communism and the Soviet Union. These values have become what is real and right in the U. S. The accommodationist ideology perceives deficiencies in this ascendant corporate system but accepts its basic structure and values as natural and inevitable. It serves corporate power by providing a mechanism for defusing discontent without basic change. The radical ideology criticizes economic evils in the system, for example, as manifestations of systemic structural inequality. Low-paying jobs, poor housing, poor health derive from a system of corporate capitalism in which inequality is inherent in the capital-labor division.

In the competition among the three ideologies most Americans have chosen the dominant and accommodationist, convinced by the full power of access enjoyed by the ruling groups that those ideals are natural and right. In the contest of ideas, the public has been persuaded to favor or at least to tolerate an organization of people and natural resources which supports corporations. This triumph has resulted not from monopoly of access for one view and total exclusion of the other, as my bibliography demonstrates, but from the decided advantage enjoyed by the dominant and accommodationist views over the radical ideology.

The development of the structure has a long history. Lawrence Chenoweth, in an anaysis which draws evidence from fifty years of Reader's Digest, The Saturday Evening Post, and best selling self-help books, argues that Americans were persuaded to accept beliefs antithetical to their psychological needs and desires but "highly profitable to industrial interests." The individualistic American success dream of self-reliance and freedom was sublimated into acceptance of conformity and obedience to corporate efficiency, and money became success (ch. 2). Joel Spring attempts to show how this development transformed educaton into an instrument of the corporate state. Going back to the

early twentieth century, he examines the indoctrination in the schools of the image of the good society as a highly organized corporate structure. As an important agency for social efficiency and therefore progress, the schools' goal was to train pupils in the specialized skills and personal characteristics essential to corporate organization. "To a great extent children became a form of natural resource that was to be molded by the schools and fed into the industrial machine" (xii). Technology, social stratification, vocational guidance, and institutional dependence ensured compliance. Freedom and individualism were still ideals but were redefined to mean a person trained for a specialized and therefore unequal place in society (see also Carnoy). Children were taught to "feel free even though their lives" were being "directed by institutional forces."

The present advantage for the dominant ideology operates in two ways, suggest Katznelson and Kesselman. First, the electorate is constantly barraged with messages reinforcing the dominant and accommodationist ideologies. Commercial advertising is the most obvious because most pervasive agency of corporate legitimation. The billions of dollars spent on advertising sell not only commodities but a way of viewing the world, a way of life advantageous to corporations: the ideology of mass commodity consumption (Mander). The networks are "vertical conduits for large corporations" (Schrank); the sponsor is "the potentate of our time" (Barnouw). Less pervasive though equally obvious is direct advocacy advertisment by corporations. In newspapers, magazines, and films, we are bombarded with messages supporting the interests of military contractors or utility companies while expressly downgrading the sponsor's opponents (Sethi). Mobil Oil spent millions of dollars a year for its Sunday newspaper "Observations" ad alone to attack government regulation of corporations, that is, to weaken environmental protection (Bennett).

The corporate information advantage works secondly by systematically misleading the public about their own interests and by preventing the public from understanding the direct connections between their daily problems and the system of corporate domination. For example, Smokey the Bear and the Weeping Indian. They are the creation of the Advertising Council, a business "public service" organization designed to "keep power where it is now lodged, but conceal its purpose" (Lutz). Instead of alarm over clear-cutting by the forest industry, we are asked to watch our matches; instead of grief over water polluted by corporate toxic wastes, we are urged not to throw cans out of our car windows (Paletz).

Full understanding of the quality of corporate and government hegemony over education in the U. S. requires knowledge of the entire system of control: economic centralization, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, global expansion, state terrorism, domestic repression, corporate and government secrecy, corporate and government public relations, advertising, intolerance, and many other structures and apparatuses which guarantee maximum access for one ideology and minimum for

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another. Perhaps not until all the evidence and argument have been assembled will the full power of education as one instrument of social control be understood by the people--if the knowledge can gain access to them.

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